

Mr. Speaker, I take a moment to thank the many stakeholders who have worked so hard to get this critical legislation done right. Hats off to all of them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is a great one. It is high time we had this one on the floor.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, America's scientific and technological leadership is being threatened by the Chinese Communist Party, and we must act urgently to reinvest in our own research and development enterprise.

H.R. 3593 redoubles our commitment to the basic research conducted by the Department of Energy's Office of Science and our national laboratories. Together with the NSF for the Future Act, it is a comprehensive and sustainable approach to American competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my staff for everything they have done to help draft this important legislation. I thank my friend, Chairwoman JOHNSON, and her staff for working with us to include Republican priorities and ensure that this is a truly bipartisan bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me simply say that we on this committee know that we are the committee that will determine the future of our Nation and the standing of the world when it comes to science. And we have taken our work very seriously. I am grateful to all of the members. We know we cannot be any better than the people who we involve and use their talents, and we must do that as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the members of the committee on both sides of the aisle for staying with us and working through all that we know we need to do to come together to look out for the future of our Nation's scientific enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of the persons, my colleagues, to support this bill and vote "yes."

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3593, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

HONORING OUR PROMISES THROUGH EXPEDITION FOR AF- GHAN SIVS ACT OF 2021

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3385) to waive the requirement to undergo a medical examination for aliens who are otherwise eligible for special immigrant status under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3385

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Honoring Our Promises through Expedition for Afghan SIVs Act of 2021" or the "HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR AFGHAN ALLIES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security may jointly issue a blanket waiver of the requirement that aliens described in section 602(b)(2) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) undergo a medical examination under section 221(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(d)), or any other applicable provision of law, prior to issuance of an immigrant visa or admission to the United States.

(b) DURATION.—A waiver issued under subsection (a) shall remain in effect for a period not to exceed 1 year, and, subject to subsection (g), may be extended by the Secretary of State and Secretary of Homeland Security for additional periods, each of which shall not exceed 1 year.

(c) NOTIFICATION.—Upon exercising the waiver authority under subsection (a), or the authority to extend a waiver under subsection (b), the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall notify the appropriate congressional committees.

(d) REQUIREMENT FOR MEDICAL EXAMINATION AFTER ADMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall establish procedures to ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that any alien who receives a waiver of the medical examination requirement under this section, completes such an examination not later than 30 days after the date on which such alien is admitted to the United States.

(2) CONDITIONAL BASIS FOR STATUS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an alien who receives a waiver of the medical examination requirement under this section shall be considered, at the time of admission to the United States, as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence on a conditional basis.

(B) REMOVAL OF CONDITIONS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall remove the conditional basis of the alien's status upon the Secretary's confirmation that such alien has completed the medical examination and is not inadmissible under section 212(a)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(1)(A)).

(3) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which waiver authority under subsection (a) is exercised or such waiver is

extended under subsection (b), as applicable, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the status of medical examinations required under paragraph (1), including—

(A) the number of pending and completed examinations; and

(B) the number of aliens who have failed to complete the medical examination within the 30-day period after the date of such aliens' admission.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and of the Senate;

(2) the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(4) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to prevent the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Defense, or the Secretary of Health and Human Services from adopting appropriate measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, to the United States.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority under subsections (a) and (b) expires on the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3385.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3385, the Honoring our Promises through Expedition for the Afghan SIVs Act—or the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act—proposes a small, but impactful, change to expedite the issuance of special immigrant visas to those who served side by side with American troops in Afghanistan, and whose lives are at risk as a result.

The Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program allows individuals who worked for or on behalf of the United States

Government or for the NATO International Security Assistance Force in support of the American mission to seek lawful permanent residence to the United States. To qualify, applicants must meet specific eligibility criteria and pass rigorous background checks; a process that, on average, takes 3 years.

Additionally, every applicant who is found to be eligible for a visa must complete a medical examination before they are approved to come to the United States. However, in the capital city of Kabul, there is only one clinic certified by the United States Government to provide these mandatory examinations.

The already high demand for services was worsened by the deteriorating security conditions and a new outbreak of an intense third wave of COVID-19. It is now nearly impossible for applicants to schedule this mandatory life-changing appointment while in Afghanistan.

The HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act would allow the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security to quickly respond to these emergency conditions in Afghanistan by authorizing a blanket waiver of the medical examination requirement for people who are otherwise eligible for special immigrant visas.

Once safely in the United States and removed from the threat of violence, those eligible people must complete the required medical examination within 30 days. To ensure compliance, Afghan special immigrants would be admitted to the United States as lawful permanent residents on a conditional basis. Conditions would be removed only when the Secretary of Homeland Security confirms that the examination has been completed and the individual is not inadmissible to the United States on health-related grounds.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join Mr. CROW of Colorado, and I thank him for championing this issue and working across the aisle to build consensus and awareness for the importance of this legislation. I also thank Ranking Member JORDAN for his collaboration and support in the drafting process.

As we draw down our military presence in Afghanistan, many who served alongside our troops continue to face increasing threats because of their service to our country. We must do right by these people, and H.R. 3385 is an important first step.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1800

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 created a special immigrant visa, or green card, program for Afghan nationals who have worked for or on behalf of the United States Government for at least a year and who have experienced a serious threat

as a result of this work. The program also provides green cards to the spouse and children of the Afghan national.

To date, over 15,500 green cards have been issued to principal applicants. Additionally, for each principal applicant, an average of 3.5 green cards have been issued to the spouse and children.

Section 221(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act requires an alien seeking a U.S. green card to undergo a physical and mental exam prior to the issuance of the green card. Any communicable diseases found during the exam must be treated before the alien is allowed to come to the U.S. This reasonable requirement helps to ensure that aliens do not introduce communicable diseases into the U.S. population once in the country.

H.R. 3385, the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act of 2021, allows the Secretaries of Homeland Security and State to waive the medical exam requirement until after the Afghan SIV holder is admitted to the U.S. Proponents of the bill believe that the waiver authority granted by the bill will speed the pace of processing for some of the Afghan population seeking green cards.

Timing is important because, earlier this year, President Biden announced that American troops would withdraw from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021. The Taliban continues to fight and take over districts in Afghanistan. There is concern that the lives of the Afghan nationals who work for the U.S. Government, and their families, are in danger because the Taliban intends to kill them.

Many in Congress would like to see all 18,000-plus remaining Afghan nationals and their families who are at some point in the SIV process immediately brought to the U.S. However, there is no way to adequately conduct the necessary background checks and to otherwise process that many green card applications in such a short time-frame.

As sympathetic as we are to this population and this situation, we should not abdicate our duty to thoroughly vet potential green card recipients. H.R. 3385 is a measured response to the chaotic situation surrounding the Afghan SIV program.

This bill is yet another piece of legislation that has skipped the committee markup process this Congress. Had this bill gone through regular order, we would have been able to discuss concerns and make potential changes. That said, late last week, Judiciary Committee Republicans worked with Mr. CROW and Mr. WENSTRUP, as well as Chairman NADLER, to address some concerns.

For instance, the sponsors agreed to reduce the 90-day window after admission for the alien to complete the medical exam to 30 days. During a global pandemic and outbreaks of other serious communicable diseases in Afghanistan, the shorter time period is more prudent.

In addition, the introduced text contained no mechanism to help ensure

that the alien actually gets the medical exam. The bill sponsors agreed to include such a mechanism. The suspension text makes clear that a green card issued to the beneficiary of a medical exam waiver is a conditional green card, which means the alien should not be able to naturalize without having completed the requisite medical exam.

The bill's sponsors also agreed to add a requirement that the administration report to Congress on the number of Afghan SIV holders who do not comply with the medical exam requirement.

Even under the improved suspension text, U.S. taxpayers may bear the cost of the medical exams and any requisite treatment for illnesses discovered. Currently, the alien bears the cost of medical exams prior to admission to the United States. However, once in the country, they are entitled to public benefits, including Medicaid. That said, the text we are considering today is a better alternative to the introduced version.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of the bill sponsors and the chairman to address these concerns, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW).

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, the Army Ranger Creed reads, in part: "I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy."

Today, Afghans who worked for U.S. forces are in grave danger. The organization No One Left Behind, a nonprofit that advocates for the relocation of Afghan interpreters to the U.S., says that more than 300 translators or their relatives have already been killed since 2014, but that number only increasing every day.

We cannot allow a slow bureaucracy to cost the lives of Afghans who served alongside our men and women.

As an Army Ranger and paratrooper, I served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In both places, I worked very closely with Iraqi and Afghan interpreters who were absolutely critical to me accomplishing my mission.

Mr. Speaker, I am not somebody who many people in this House would say is prone to hyperbole or exaggeration, but I can say with confidence that I might not be here today speaking to all of my colleagues had it not been for these men and women who trusted us, who fought with us, who died with us, shoulder to shoulder.

They provided this service at great risk to themselves and their families, and they did so with courage and the understanding that we would stand with them and provide a safe haven if and when necessary.

Well, my friends and colleagues, that time has come.

Today, we are considering the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act to allow the administration to waive the requirement that Afghan special immigrant visa applicants undergo a medical examination while in Afghanistan.

As my colleagues already pointed out, there is currently one facility in Kabul that conducts all of these examinations. It is already dangerous and increasingly dangerous to get to that facility, to work through the backlog, and to afford those examinations.

Under our bill, recipients would be required to get a medical examination within 30 days of arriving in the United States.

Let me be clear. Nothing in this bill would impact the security screening and vetting process for these applicants. The National Security Council estimates that this change could decrease the SIV process by approximately 1 month per applicant.

My colleagues, in combat and in a war zone, every hour matters. Minutes seem like hours, days like weeks. A month will save many, many lives.

We wouldn't be considering this bill on the floor today if it weren't for a broad coalition of supporters.

To my friend and colleague, Representative WENSTRUP, I thank him for his partnership. I know how important this is to him, too, for personal reasons.

Mr. Speaker, to the members of the Honoring Our Promises Working Group, I thank them for their steadfast attention to this issue and for their support of this bill, Republicans and Democrats alike.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Leader HOYER, Chairman NADLER, Chairwoman LOFGREN, and her subcommittee staff, Ami Shah and Betsy Lawrence, for working very late the last couple of weeks to make sure we got this deal done.

The American handshake needs to mean something, not just in and of itself. But we are strong as a country not because we have aircraft carrier battle groups, fighters, and tanks. We are strong because we have friends. And to have friends, we need to be a friend. We must stand by our partners.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act.

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of H.R. 3385, the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act, which the gentleman from Colorado and I introduced to help knock down one small barrier to getting our Afghan friends and allies out of harm's way, which they greatly deserve.

I truly appreciate the words expressed by my colleague because they reflect so many of my same feelings.

The bill is not a permanent solution to fixing our special immigrant visa program, but it is a critical temporary waiver to help cut down on the backlog of pending Afghan SIV applications.

During a time of great emergency, it is a life and death situation, without a doubt.

There is currently only one facility in Afghanistan that performs the required medical exams, located in

Kabul. Because exams are only valid for a few months, many applicants must make repeated trips to Kabul at their own cost and risk.

H.R. 3385 would allow the Secretary of State and the DHS Secretary to jointly issue a 1-year waiver for the in-country medical exam requirement, up to 3 years. But, importantly, the bill requires, to the greatest extent practical, that the applicant undergoes the medical exam no later than 30 days after being admitted to the United States.

It explicitly states that nothing in the bill prohibits our agencies from adopting appropriate measures to prevent the spread of disease here. All it does is allow the applicant to undergo the medical exam here instead of in Kabul.

During my tour in Iraq, I worked alongside Iraqi interpreters who risked their lives to serve with us and help us complete our mission. Many eventually used a similar program to escape harm's way and to build a life in the United States. The two that I worked with and supported are now full U.S. citizens here in America. One is a cardiologist, and the other has a family practice.

As we withdraw from Afghanistan, the Afghans who served by our sides, the translators, the contractors, and the guides, without whom we could not do our jobs, are left in the crosshairs of the Taliban. They worked for the United States, despite knowing the risk to their own lives and their families. They believed in us, and they believed in our cause.

It will be a black eye on the United States if we don't do everything in our power to protect these allies. If we don't honor our promises, if we allow our friends to be targeted and killed by groups like the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qaida because they worked with and for the United States of America, we will send a message to those we will need to rely on in the future that we are unable to live up to our side of the bargain.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his tireless work in bringing this issue to the forefront as we withdraw from Afghanistan, for all the staff that put in so much time to get this done, and for our bipartisan Honoring Our Promises Working Group for keeping the pressure on the administration to make sure that we don't leave our allies behind.

Mr. Speaker, please support this bill. It is a good thing for America to do.

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative CROW for his service, his powerful words, and his commitment. I thank Representative WENSTRUP, too, for his powerful words.

Our Afghan allies serve alongside U.S. troops, diplomats, and govern-

ment employees. We must do right by the people who have worked to protect our country and our servicemen and -women.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to support them through the HOPE for Afghan SIVs Act. I support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3385, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2225) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026 for the National Science Foundation, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 345, nays 67, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 186]

YEAS—345

Adams	Bacon	Bera
Aguilar	Baird	Bergman
Allred	Balderson	Beyer
Amodel	Barr	Bice (OK)
Armstrong	Barragán	Bilirakis
Auchincloss	Bass	Bishop (GA)
Axne	Beatty	Blumenauer
Babin	Bentz	Blunt Rochester